

# Losing my religion

**Dear Annie:** We raised our children in church, and then lost our religion. There were so many reasons for that, but there's no going back to any church in the future. Part of our family, a very small part, accepts this. But most have a problem with it. Adding insult to injury, we live in the Bible Belt, and having no religion is very suspect here. The political climate makes all of this even more unbearable.

We can't leave; this is our home. We can't express an opinion with some family members because we'd get disowned or shunned or both. Some of our relationships with close family members have never been the same since we left church, which was many years ago.

All of this only reinforces our decision. Who wants anything to do with this type of closed-mindedness? But we have tremendous guilt over raising our children in this way, and then walking away from it. Our only defense is that we were young and dumb and didn't think for ourselves until much later. We were obedient chil-

dren. We did what we were told, and this is where we ended up.

Religion in the Bible Belt is more than belief; it's a cultural inheritance. How do we move on and keep our roots, too? One child is distant toward us, but the others are forgiving. It seems like so much of our energy is focused on the distant child, rather than enjoying the others who get where we're coming from and feel as we do. We feel emotionally blackmailed by this

child. I hope you can shed some light on this for me. I love life and feel connected to the universe in so many ways. I just want to spend the remainder of my time enjoying the journey, seeking ways to help others and being truly present in the moment.

Thank you, Annie! I love your column and your thoughtful advice. —*Ironically Blessed*

**Dear Ironically Blessed:** You sound too blessed to be stressed about what other people are thinking about you.

When you raised your chil-

dren, you did the best you could with what you thought was right at the time. Then you changed your mind about what you thought was right for yourself and your family. The issue is not whether it was right or wrong to raise your children in a church. The issue how to let go of this guilt and to give yourself a break about the choices you made in the past and instead focus on the choices you are making right now.

Guilt and shame will not lead you to your goal of wanting to love the life you live.

If you want to spend your time enjoying the journey and living in the present moment, then continue focusing on the positive and all the beauty of life. No matter what your religion, your goal of wanting to help others is commendable.

Even though it is painful that one of your children is distant from you now, continue to show your child compassion and love. Hopefully, he or she will come around.

In the words of Theodor Seuss Geisel, aka Dr. Seuss, "Be who you are and say what you feel, because in the end those who matter don't mind and those who mind don't matter."

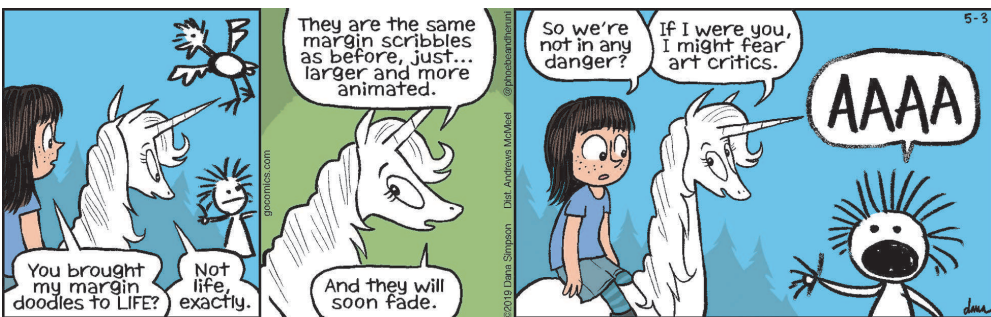
## FRANK AND ERNEST



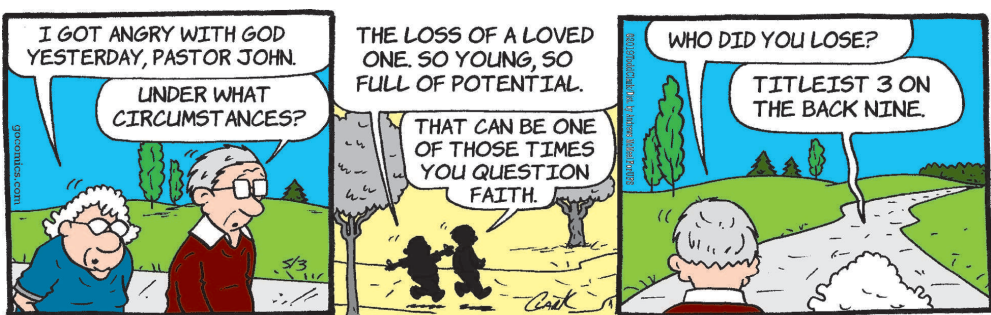
## THATABABY



## PHOEBE AND HER UNICORN



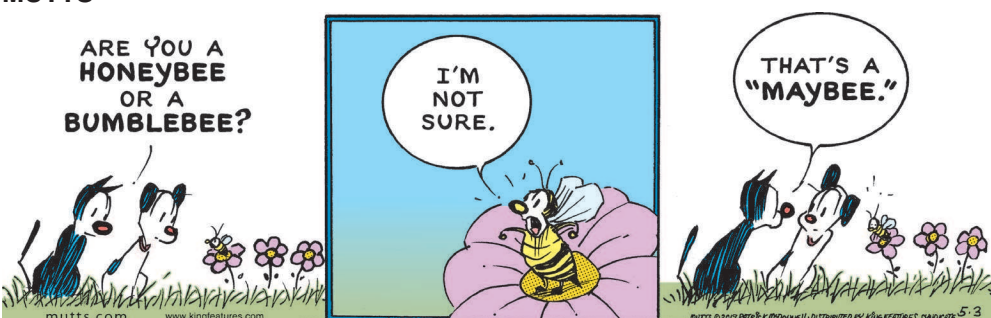
## LOLA



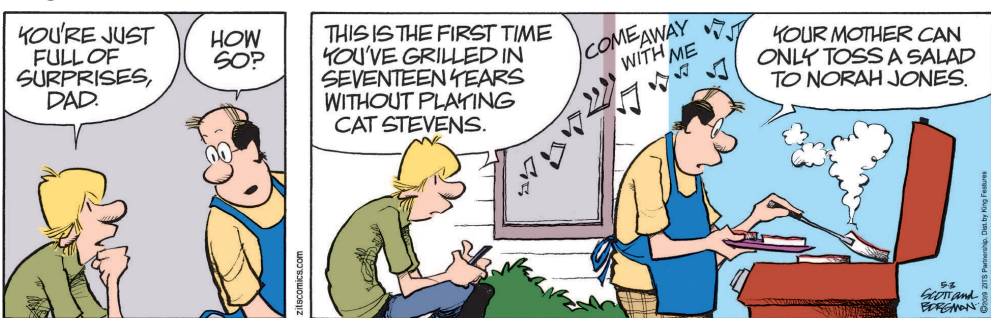
## SIX CHIX



## MUTTS



## BABY BLUES



By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Before you get into trying to make your mark on a situation, you want to observe carefully to learn what it actually is. Bonus: As you strive for a state of mental openness and receptivity, your stress levels plummet pleasantly.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Some of the things that were stressing you out do not deserve or require your attention. Those items are entangled with actionable items you actually do need to handle. It's sorting time!

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** What's keeping you from adoring yourself? Likely it's nothing more than wrongheaded social conditioning. Get on your own side. It's easier to be loving and respectful of others when your own need for love and respect is met.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Your excellent mood will perhaps be less contagious than you'd like when it comes to your most familiar people. Just because you love someone doesn't mean you should let that person bring you down.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** Keeping up appearances can be excellent, as it also keeps you in a routine of self-care and general maintenance. But at some point you need to realize for whom you're doing it. Forget about them; this is what's best for you.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Remind yourself of the qualities you prefer to see in the people you spend time with. New people are coming into your world and your choice of company can change who you are.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** Relationships need to be figured out over time. You only find out the sticking points by experiencing life together. And you smooth the rough patches in the same way.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Certain people shake your confidence while others bolster it. Tune in. It will be amusing to watch your own range in this regard and then later to ponder the reasons. There are excellent personal insights to be garnered here.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Whatever your plan was for yourself, you'll have the gumption to stick to it today. But what about tomorrow? This is why you need to find a person you can trust to be accountable to.

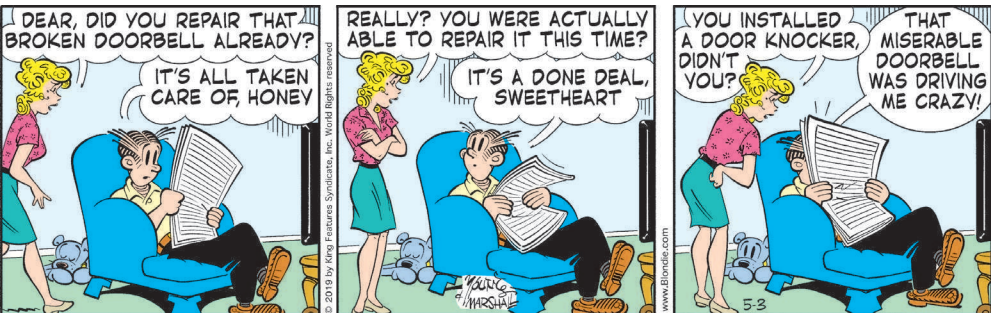
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Friendships will be affected by altered circumstances and routines, but don't let that worry you. This is the natural progression and will ultimately support the highest and best in all.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** You've been very happy with your choices and therefore not too worried about anyone else's. But now you're starting to notice that there are new options on the horizon. Curiosity drives you to learn more.

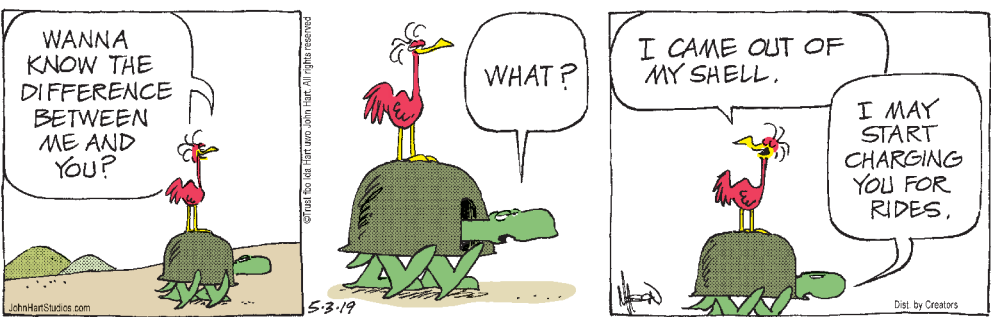
**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** Lately, you haven't given much thought about what you stand for because you haven't had to. It's been obvious to you! However, this is a good time to check in with yourself regarding your beliefs; subtle changes are afoot.

**TOMORROW'S BIRTHDAY (May 4).** You adopt a posture of service to engage with the people around you and try to make their lives better. This is what drives your happiness and it will become a source of income as well. The blossoming of someone you mentor will lead to astounding luck for both of you. Property gets bought and sold in 2020. Capricorn and Pisces adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 5, 40, 9, 28 and 10.

## BLONDIE



## B.C.



## DILBERT



## BIZARRO



## NON SEQUITUR



## WIZARD OF ID



## ROSE IS ROSE

